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LETTER DATED 31 AUGUST 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and the above-mentioned statement circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hassan A. HASSANOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

[Original: Russian]

Statement issued on 31 August 1993 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic

In accordance with the Act of the Azerbaijani Republic on the Referendum and the Resolution of the National Assembly (Parliament) of Azerbaijan of 29 July 1993, a national referendum was held in the Azerbaijani Republic on 29 August 1993 to determine the nation's confidence in Abulfaz Elchibey, the President of the Azerbaijani Republic. The aforementioned decision of the highest legislative organ of Azerbaijan was taken in connection with the sudden departure, on 15 June 1993, of President Elchibey to the remote mountain village of Keleki in Ordubad district of Azerbaijan, where he spent more than two months and lost contact with the leaders of the organs of State administration and was virtually unable to perform his duties as head of State. This situation posed an immediate threat to Azerbaijani statehood, led to the near collapse of the structures of State power and administration, heightened tension in social and economic life and sharply exacerbated the already complicated situation in the region of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

In the opinion of many official representatives of foreign States and correspondents from leading world news agencies who observed the referendum, the referendum was held in a spirit of legality and in accordance with democratic principles. No violations of the Act on the Referendum or of Parliament's Resolution on the Conduct of the Referendum were noted at the polling stations. Everywhere, the necessary conditions were created to ensure the participation in the voting of refugees and displaced persons who had been forced to leave their homes as a result of the occupation of Azerbaijani lands by the Armenian armed forces.

It should also be noted that, at the invitation of the Azerbaijani side, the conduct of the referendum was observed by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Official representatives of China, Egypt, Greece, Iran, the Russian Federation, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America also took part as observers. In order to ensure objectivity and openness in the conduct of the referendum, representatives of 32 Azerbaijani political parties and movements were attached to district election commissions. The referendum was covered by correspondents from leading world news agencies, such as Associated Press, United Press International, Reuters, Agence France-Presse and others.

In spite of the complicated social and political situation in the country, the citizens of the Azerbaijani Republic demonstrated a high level of political activity in the referendum. Ninety-two per cent of Azerbaijani citizens eligible to vote took part in the voting; 97.5 per cent of those who took part in the referendum expressed their lack of confidence in President Abulfaz Elchibey.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic declares that the national referendum was conducted in keeping with the generally accepted international norms and is confident that the results of the referendum will serve to strengthen democratic principles in Azerbaijan.